

Message Text

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42

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AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

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AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: THE FDP: IS RHEINLAND-PFALZ A SIGNAL
FOR BONN?

REF: FRANKFURT 397

SUMMARY: THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ FDP'S DECISION TO
SEEK A COALITION WITH THE CDU HAS REINFORCED THE
FDP'S IMAGE OF BEING "OPEN TO ALL SIDES" AND
RENEWED SPECULATION THAT IT MIGHT ALSO CONTEMPLATE
A COALITION WITH THE CDU AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. HOW-
EVER, A CDU/FDP COALITION IN MAINZ, EVEN IF IT SHOULD
COME TO PASS, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN VERY MUCH
FOR BONN. END SUMMARY

1. THE FDP NATIONAL LEADERS--GENSCHER, BANGEMANN,
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MISCHNICK AND FRIDERICH--HAVE ALL ATTEMPTED TO DOWN-

PLAY THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ FDP'S COALITION OFFER TO THE CDU, LABELING IT A "STRICTLY LAND-LEVEL POLITICAL DECISION." ECONOMICS MINISTER FRIDERICH, A POWER IN THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ FDP, NUMBER TWO MAN ON THE FDP'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD AND CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE PRO-CDU, MADE A POINT OF NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE VOTE OF EITHER THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ EXECUTIVE BOARD OR THE LAND PARTY CONVENTION.

2. THE FDP IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ HAS BEEN CONSIDERED "A SPECIAL CASE" FOR SOME TIME. DESPITE THE FORMATION OF THE SPD/FDP NATIONAL COALITION IN 1969, THE FDP/CDU COALITION IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ CONTINUED UNTIL 1971, AND EVEN IN THE 1971 LANDTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGN THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ FDP URGED THE CONTINUATION OF ITS COALITION WITH THE CDU (ALTHOUGH AFTER ITS POOR SHOWING OF 5.9 PERCENT IT TURNED DOWN KOHL'S OFFER FOR COALITION DISCUSSIONS).

3. AS HELMUT KOHL HAS RATHER ICILY POINTED OUT, THE FDP OFFER OF HELP TO THE CDU DOES NOT COME WHERE IT IS NEEDED. THE CDU EXPECTS TO WIN A MAJORITY IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ ANYWAY. IN FACT, THE FDP'S PRO-CDU STANCE IS DETRIMENTAL TO THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ CDU AND TO KOHL PERSONALLY SINCE FDP VOTERS WHO MIGHT HAVE SWITCHED TO THE CDU THIS TIME WILL PROBABLY REMAIN WITH THE FDP.

4. THE FDP HAS DEMONSTRATED LITTLE INTEREST IN JOINING FORCES WITH THE CDU WHERE IT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN HESSE. ANOTHER LAND WHERE THE FDP'S POSTURE COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IS OBVIOUSLY POPULOUS NRW. THE FDP THERE IS EXPECTED TO DECIDE THIS WEEKEND IN FAVOR OF CONTINUING ITS COALITION WITH THE SPD.

5. THERE WILL STILL BE ROOM FOR MANEUVERING AFTER THE NRW AND RHEINLAND-PFALZ ELECTION RESULTS ARE IN. KOHL HAS FROM TIME TO TIME HINTED THAT EVEN IF THE CDU WINS A MAJORITY IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ, IT MIGHT INVITE THE FDP INTO THE GOVERNMENT IN RETURN FOR AN FDP DECISION TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JOIN WITH THE CDU IN GOVERNING NRW. THIS, OF COURSE, BECAUSE OF THE EFFECTS ON THE BUNDESRAT AND THE NATIONAL POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE, WOULD PLACE THE FDP BEFORE A DECISION OF MAJOR NATIONAL CONSEQUENCES. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THE CDU IS STILL RIDING HIGH AFTER ITS VICTORIES IN HESSE AND BAVARIA AND SETTING ITS SIGHTS ON ABSOLUTE MAJORITIES IN RHEINLAND-PFALZ, NRW AND IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS--AND LEAVING

THE FDP LOOKING MORE LIKE A HOPEFUL COAT TAIL RIDER
THAN A "FLEXIBLE" PARTY WITH AN "IDENTITY."
CASH

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